

November 13, 2020

The Honorable John Arthur Smith  
New Mexico State Senator  
Chair, Legislative Finance Committee  
325 Don Gaspar Avenue, Suite 101  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Senator Smith:

This letter is to inform you that the Indian Affairs Committee has heard testimony from the Santa Fe Indian School related to the school's academic performance and capital outlay priorities for the upcoming 2021 legislative session. The Santa Fe Indian School is requesting \$300,000 in severance tax bond funds to provide resources for the purpose of planning and design to replace infrastructure related to a major new entrance that the school is building, including boundary fencing, storm water drainage mitigation and other infrastructure needs for the Santa Fe Indian School campus. The money will be used to finish the project.

The Santa Fe Indian School clarified for the Indian Affairs Committee that the school is recognized as a statewide educational institution, and students who attend the school come from nearly a dozen counties across the state and represent the 19 Indian pueblos, the Navajo Nation, the Jicarilla Apache Nation and the Mescalero Apache Tribe. The committee has also come to understand that, unlike other entities such as higher education institutions, public schools and other statewide public facilities, the Santa Fe Indian School does not have any other avenue for presenting capital outlay requests at a formal capital outlay public hearing. Hence, the school is presenting its capital outlay priority to the Indian Affairs Committee.

The Indian Affairs Committee was particularly impressed with the academic performance of Santa Fe Indian School students and the school's overall graduation rates. The school is educating a segment of New Mexico's student population that would otherwise be required to attend public schools where additional operating dollars would need to be allocated by the state to support those students.

The Honorable John Arthur Smith  
November 13, 2020  
Page 2

The Indian Affairs Committee respectfully requests that the Legislative Finance Committee consider the Santa Fe Indian School's severance tax bond capital outlay request for recommendation to the legislature and to the governor for funding as a statewide project.

Sincerely,

GEORGENE LOUIS  
State Representative, District 26  
Co-Chair, Indian Affairs Committee

SHANNON D. PINTO  
State Senator, District 3  
Co-Chair, Indian Affairs Committee

cc: Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham  
David Abbey, Director, Legislative Finance Committee  
Representative Patricia A. Lundstrom, Vice Chair, Legislative Finance Committee

GL/SDP:clm